

Editorial preface

This volume is published as a by-product of NoFa5 Helsinki conference, arranged 27-29 May 2015. NoFa (Nordisk fagdidaktisk konferens) is a Nordic biennial meeting of researchers on subject education. The conference aims to bring together senior and junior academics and graduate students to discuss their research on the topical issues of education and teaching. In the NoFa5 conference programme, there were three parallel sessions that represented issues of Craft/Sloyd education.

The purpose of the first session *Changing pedagogies and diversities in craft and sloyd* was to discuss the ongoing changes in society, pedagogies and curricula of craft/sloyd education from a wide range of viewpoints and educational levels. The focus of this session was to look at how diversities on different levels (social, cultural etc) appear, and how they can or should be reflected upon, in Craft/Sloyd education.

The second parallel session was called *Hands on learning in diverse material world! Innovative orientations in sloyd and technology learning and teaching?* This session focused on discussing active and creative learning in a continuously changing and developing technological environment. Craft /Sloyd (Design and Technology) education, together with other arts and skills based subjects, reinforce the interplay of hands on and cognitive human factors. The purpose of this session was to address innovative orientations in researching and identifying the complex and diverse material world as entities and objects of learning and teaching, as well as looking for the key drivers of future pedagogies and cross-curricular practices in diverse multi-material technological learning contexts.

The third session related to craft and sloyd education was called *Diverse practices in multimodal and embodied learning and teaching*. This session concentrated on learning as a holistic human activity that requires understanding on multimodality and embodied experience. The focus of this session was to encourage various subjects to share their ideas, knowledge and research results on diverse learning contexts, on various age groups and on cross-curricular themes and learning contents.

In each of these sessions there were interesting presentations related to the special theme, altogether 33 studies were presented. The presenters represented all universities in Finland that have subject teacher education in crafts/sloyd, as well as researchers from universities in Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. There was an open call for all the presenters to submit an article based on their presentations to this special issue of *Techne*. We were happy to get the articles that are now included in this issue. All these articles have passed a double blind review process and represent each of the Craft/Sloyd related sessions of the NoFa5 Helsinki conference.

Tarja Kröger presented her study “Diverse orientations in craft education:

Student teachers’ conceptions and perceptions” in the session *Changing pedagogies and diversities in craft and sloyd*. In the article, Kröger introduces her study on the class teacher students’ conceptions and perceptions about the diverse orientations in craft education and the importance of it. The students had answered an online questionnaire before they had begun their studies in craft pedagogy. Theoretically, Tarja Kröger gives an important literature overview of different orientations towards crafts and craft education. Her research findings offer a useful perspective to the development of teacher education programmes. Drawing from her research, Kröger argues that teacher education programmes should consider courses and projects that will help student teachers to reconstruct and modify their

preconceived perceptions and conceptions about craft education, in the hope that it will promote professional growth.

Henna Lahti, Kaiju Kangas, Veera Koponen and Pirita Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, presented their research “Material mediation and embodied actions in collaborative design process” in the session *Hands on learning in diverse material world! Innovative orientations in sloyd and technology learning and teaching*. Their article tells about a study in which collaborative teams of three textile teacher-students designed three-dimensional toys based on children’s drawings. Different teams were given different materials to work on in their design process. Based on multiple levels of analysis of the video-recorded data, the results highlight the strengths of 3D modelling techniques, particularly through comparison with the drawing technique undertaken by one of the design teams. The results reveal that simple material tools support students’ design process and suggest this could be applied to other design settings.

Ana Nuutinen, Riikka Räisänen and Päivi Fernström took part in the session *Hands on learning in diverse material world! Innovative orientations in sloyd and technology learning and teaching* with a presentation “Material and surface - Course synergy as a channel towards a more encompassing view of learning”. Their study describes students’ experiences of taking part in a course that combined four minor courses into one integrated whole during the first year of craft teacher education studies. The aim of combining these courses was to support integrated learning and transform fragmented education into a thematically coherent whole. In the new model, the four minor courses form an intertwined and progressive structure. During the courses, the students worked in groups and shared experiences, which strengthened collective values and meanings. Diversity appeared to be the most important feature that arose from the data.

Marja-Leena Rönkkö and Jaana Lepistö presented their study “The craft process developing student decision making” in the session *Diverse practices in multimodal and embodied learning and teaching*. By interviewing 13-year-old students in basic education, the researchers examined dimensions of their decision-making during a craft process.

The results indicate that the quality of the students’ decision-making during a craft process is dependent on their personal goals, self-confidence, and previous experiences. In addition, there is a connection between the students’ decision-making and the social environment; this was revealed for example in their willingness to emphasize their own personality or similarity to their peers.

This *Techne* volume introduces only some of the research that was presented in the sessions on Craft /Sloyd education in the NoFa5 Helsinki conference. However, they give a good picture of the research that is conducted in this field on various levels of education from comprehensive school to the university level. For Craft / Sloyd education to prosper and develop, research-based evidence is highly important. We thank all the authors for submitting these interesting articles. Those participants of the NoFa5 conference who were not able to submit an article for this special issue, are encouraged to consider doing it later in other *Techne* volumes.

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